

Sanatana Bharat
TIMELESS INDIA



Jagrita Bharat
RESURGENT INDIA

Since independence, people in different parts of India have made great efforts to rebuild the nation. Yet, by most indicators of economic prosperity, India remains far behind other comparable nations of the world. We, as the inheritors of a civilization that, for millennia, surpassed the world in all fields of human endeavour, must sit down and think hard about how to regain the glory that rightfully belongs to our land and our people.

In this book, Dr. Bajaj and Dr. Srinivas describe the geography and history of India: the magnitude of her spiritual and social depth; the abundance of her natural wealth; the uniqueness of her culture and customs; the brilliance of her ideas and institutions. They take us through a fascinating story of glory and gloom, splendour and stagnation. They illustrate with inspiring examples how India can redeem her pride, restore her spiritual supremacy and regain her material leadership; how 'Timeless India' holds the key to a 'Resurgent India'.



CENTRE FOR POLICY STUDIES CHENNAI

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*Sanatana Bharat * Jagrita Bharat*

TIMELESS INDIA RESURGENT INDIA

A Celebration of the Land and People of India



JITENDRA BAJAJ
M D SRINIVAS

Bharat
INDIA

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Indian civilisation has a long history, perhaps the longest amongst the great civilisations of the world. Through most of her history, India has seen herself and has been seen by others as the land of great wealth and even greater wisdom. The recent experience of alien rule seems to have led to a certain loss of pride in India. Indians, particularly the metropolitan elite Indians, have lost sight of not only the civilisational greatness of India but also of her natural abundance.

Once our memory is restored, and we begin to form a proper appreciation of our geography and history, we shall certainly begin to undertake the task of reviving the affluence and wisdom of India in earnest.

This book and the exhibits it depicts have been prepared for the Swadeshi Industrial Fair being held in the city of Coimbatore as part of the ongoing Swadeshi Movement. We are thankful to Sri S. Gurumurthy, a leader of this movement and our valued colleague in the Centre, for encouraging us to undertake this exercise and facilitating it in all possible ways.

*Saura Pausa Purnima
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JKB & MDS

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*Jacket depicts the stone carving of Ganga with Yamuna at her side at
Sri Rameswara Temple, Ellora, Cave 21*

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A Land of Rare Natural Endowments

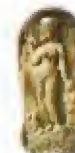




A Vast and Rich Land

India is a vast country. From the northern borders of Kashmir to the southernmost tip at Kanyakumari, our land extends over 3,200 kilometres, and from the eastern boundary of Assam to the western border of Baluchistan, it extends over 3,500 kilometres. Total area of what has historically constituted India is 423 million hectares. Of this about 94 million hectares today fall under Pakistan and Bangladesh, and 329 million hectares in the Indian Union.

In terms of area, Indian Union today is the eighth largest region in the world, after the Russian Federation (1708 mn hectares), China (960 mn hectares), USA and Territories (936 mn hectares), Canada (922 mn hectares), Brazil (851 mn hectares), Australia (786 mn hectares), and Western Europe (371 mn hectares). But that does not mean that the Indian land is eighth in value. On the contrary, India is one of the richest regions of the world.



The Largest Cultivable Area in the World

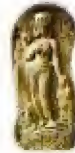
India is blessed with extraordinary fertility within its relatively compact landmass. In terms of cultivable area, India is in fact the best-endowed country of the world. Three-fifths of our geographical area is cultivable. In most other valuable regions of the world, no more than one-fifth of the lands are cultivable. And the average for the world is only one-tenth.

Measured in terms of cultivable area, India is the richest region of the world. The Indian region commands 190 million hectares

of cultivable land, of which 160 million hectares are in the Indian Union. Cultivable area of the USA is 177 million hectares, that of the Russian Federation 126, China 124, Western Europe 77, Australia 56, and Brazil 53 million hectares.

India not only has a larger cultivable area than all other great regions of the world; Indian lands are also the most fertile. And the compact geography of India has always been described in superlative terms.





Protected and Nurtured by the Himalayas

The key to India's peculiar geography and extraordinary fertility lies in the Himalayan Ranges. The Himalayas are the loftiest mountain range in the world. From 200 to 400 km wide, this Roof of the World stretches for 2,400 km across the north of India. It boasts of the three highest points on the earth's surface: Gowri Shankar also known as Mt. Everest at 29,028 feet (8848 m), K2 at 28,250 feet (8611 m) and Kanchenjunga at 28,208 feet (8598 m). There are fifty Himalayan summits of 25,000 feet (8,000 m) or more. The Himalayan range has an average elevation of 19,000 feet (6,000 m). The length, breadth

and height of the Himalayas are unparalleled in the world.

The mighty Himalayas, with great subsidiary ranges curving southward at either end, look on the relief map like a grand wizened benefactor protectively holding the Indian landmass in his outstretched arms. The Himalayas indeed protect and nurture the Indian land with great generosity. Geographically, the Himalayas belong as much to Tibet as to India, but their bounty is reserved entirely for India. All the rain that falls and all the snow that melts, whether on the northern or southern flanks of the Himalayas, is poured into India.



The Sindhu-Ganga Plain

The waters that the Himalayas pour into India, through the three great Himalayan rivers, Sindhu, Ganga and Brahmaputra, and their tributaries, bring with them large quantities of life-giving silt. The Sindhu-Ganga plain, the most fertile area of its size in the world, is formed by the silt of the Himalayas.

The Sindhu-Ganga plain is noted for its antiquity, size, fertility, depth and flatness. It extends from the Sindhu delta in the west to the Ganga delta in the east. The entire plain, some 3,000 kilometres long and 250 kilometres wide, is alluvial. The plain covers about a fifth of the geographical area of India; and the whole of it is cultivable.

An American scholar writing on the eve of Indian Independence speaks about this extraordinary plain in the following terms:

"A great part of its soil is renewed every year by floods, and the mud brought down from the hills is so fine that it is reputedly possible to traverse the entire length of the plain 'without finding a pebble, however small.' The

alluvium, in addition to being remarkably uniform over its entire extent of approximately 80 million hectares, is extremely thick. The exact thickness has never been ascertained, but borings have penetrated it to a depth of 1,300 feet without reaching a rocky bottom. The plain is also exceptionally flat. It has 'not a hill, not even a mound to break the monotony of the level surface.' Agra, halfway between the two deltas and more than 2,000 kilometres by river from the sea, is only 550 feet above sea level. 'This flatness makes the rivers flow slowly, thus fertilising the country thoroughly and affording easy waterways and irrigation channels.' This is one of the world's greatest expanses of rich, tillable soil, and thus one of the world's greatest agricultural regions."

Today the depth of the alluvium in this plain, has been measured up to 8000 metres, in a zone running all along the Himalayas, and the average alluvium filling for the entire plain is estimated to be 1300 to 1500 metres.





The Great Coastal Plains

Besides the Sindhu-Ganga plain, which covers a fifth of the geographical area of India and two-fifths of the cultivable lands, there are the coastal plains, which are also alluvial and equally fertile.

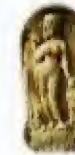
The plain in the west, called the Konkan in its upper and Malabar in its lower part, is relatively narrow, averaging about 70 kilometres in width. The plain in the east, covering Kalinga, Andhra and Chola mandalam regions from the north to the south, is broader, and is endowed with the fertile deltas of the rivers flowing across the broad Deccan plateau.

These two coastal plains contain almost 40 million hectares of land, all of which is cultivable.

The Sindhu-Ganga plain and the two coastal plains together thus encompass one-third of the geographical area and two-thirds of the cultivable area of the Indian region. All of this area is highly fertile.

Most of the remaining cultivable land lies in the Deccan plateau, which rises from 1000 to 2000 feet above sea-level and is broken up into many river valleys and hills. The black cotton soil of the northwestern part of the plateau and the river valleys are fertile, though not as rich as the alluvial plains.

Such unbroken and abundant fertility in such a compact geography is unknown anywhere else in the world.



The Ganga River

The Sindhu, Ganga and Brahmaputra are amongst the mightiest rivers of the world. But the Ganga is special. It is the physical and spiritual life force of India.

From Gangotri to Gangasagar, the Ganga flows over a distance of 2,525 kilometres. The average flow of the Ganga is 38,000 cubic metres per second, making it the third amongst the greatest rivers of the world, after only the Amazon in South America (100,000 cu. m. per sec.) and the Congo in Africa (43,000 cu. m. per sec.). The Ganga brings 360 million tons of the Himalayan silt every year to the great Indian plains. Only the Huanghe, which is almost a river of mud, and the Mississippi and Changjiang carry more silt.

The Ganga is great not merely in statistics. The river flows slowly and gracefully through the entire heartland of India, steadily

endowing it with fertilising silt and life-giving water. This is the secret of the great fertility of the Indian plains. The heartland of India is born of the Ganga and the Ganga has nurtured it for uncounted millennia.

Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, who was not given to emotions about the sacred geography of India, was moved to write:

"The Ganga is above all the 'River of India', which had held India's heart captive and drawn uncounted millions to her banks since the dawn of history. The story of the Ganga from her source to sea... is the story of India's civilisation and culture..."

Other countries have given the name of Ganga to their greatest rivers. The Sri Lankans call their greatest river, the Mahaveli Ganga, and the Mekong of Indo-China is an anglicisation of Maha Ganga.





Other Great Rivers of India

Great Rivers give rise to great civilisations. Most major civilisations of the world have sprung around some single great river. Egypt rose on the Nile; Mesopotamia rose on Euphrates and Tigris; Europe on the Danube.

India is an unusual region of the world that is blessed with not one but several great rivers, each of which is individually capable of giving rise to and supporting a great civilisation on its own. Moving from the north to south, we have the Sindhu and the five rivers of the Punjab plains; the Yamuna, Sarayu, Gandak, Kosi, and the Ganga and Brahmaputra of the heartland; the Narmada and Tapi crossing the deccan plateau from the east to the west; the Mahanadi crossing the

plateau from the west to the east and fertilising Madhya Pradesh and northern Orissa; Godavari, passing through Maharashtra and Andhra; and Krishna and Kaveri in the South supporting great fertile valleys of Andhra, Karnataka and Tamilnadu. These are the greatest of our rivers. And, there are many more passing through almost every part of India. There is no geographical region of the world of comparable size that has such an abundance of rivers.

The Indians have always been aware of the great blessing bestowed upon them in the form of these rivers. Most Indians pay obeisance to the great rivers of India during their morning ablutions.



The Abundant Rains

The rainfall of India, and hence the capacity of our rich lands to produce abundant crops, depend on the monsoon. Monsoon is Arabic for season; Indians call it the *varsha kala*. In the three months of the *varsha kala*, India obtains 90 percent of the total rain. Almost every part of India is drenched in the bounty. Only the Sindhu plain—including Sindh, and parts of Baluchistan, Rajputana, Punjab and North-West Frontier—and extreme southern parts of the eastern coast receive scanty rain. The Himalayas play a crucial role in making the rain winds rise and then forcing them to exhaust their entire moisture over India. Tibet on the other side of the Himalayas receives none of it.

Average annual rainfall in the Indian region amounts to 105 cm, which is the largest anywhere in the world for a country of comparable size.

The rains pour a total of 4500 billion cubic metres of water over the Indian region. The USA with about 2.5 times the geographical area of the Indian region receives about the same amount of water. And, the USA is considered to be one of the richest regions of the world in natural endowments. China, with a geographical area somewhat larger than the USA, receives about 6000 billion cubic metres, with average annual rainfall of 63 cm.

Of the rainwaters that India receives annually, about 450 billion cubic metres recharge the groundwater resources, and about 2000 billion cu. m. flows through the rivers of India. The rivers of China carry about 2600 billion cubic metres of water and those of the USA 1500 billion cubic metres. Thus the bounty that India receives from the rains is comparable to the most bounteous and much larger regions of the world.





The Sunshine and Warmth of India

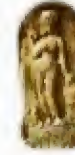
The Himalayas not only nurture the Indian lands with silt and water, they also conserve the heat and warmth necessary to harvest abundant crops.

Geographically India is not a tropical region. All of India lies to the north of the equator, and 60% of India lies north of the tropic of Cancer. This location should normally make much of India cold, like other countries in the so-called temperate zone. But, the great wall of Himalayas effectively screens India from the cold northern winds and at the same time concentrates the monsoon winds blowing up from the warm tropical seas. This unusual geographical feature makes India fairly warm and humid, making it almost the ideal place on earth for luxurious growth of crops, and life in general.

The sun shines over almost the whole of India throughout the

year, allowing us to grow crops round the year. Almost everywhere in India, and certainly in the fertile plains and river valleys of India, it is possible to grow two crops in a year, and with effort, even three. There is hardly any other region of the world, where this is possible over such a large area. In China, just one crop can be grown a year in the northern half of the cultivable zone, and only in the tropical zone in the south can China grow five crops in two years, as is possible in almost the whole of India.

The Land, the Himalayas, the Sun and the Waters seem to have combined together in India in a rare synthesis to make it the richest agricultural region of the world. It is not lightly said that India is called Bharat, because this land is capable of carrying out *bharana* of the whole world, of feeding the entire earth.



Vegetation and Animals of India

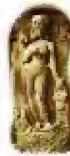
With such rich soils, climate and water, it is not surprising that India supports an extraordinarily great variety of flora and fauna. There are about 45,000 species of plants including shrubs in the country. Of these 35 percent are endemic to India, and are not found anywhere else in the world. This makes India one amongst the countries with the highest diversity of vegetation in the world.

India supports 75,000 species of animals, birds and insects. This forms one-twelfth of the known fauna of the earth, though in

terms of geographical area, we are only one fortieth of earth. India is also known to be very rich in the variety of micro-organisms it supports.

Indians are known to have been proficient in the study of their flora and fauna since very early times. The number of herbs and animals described in the ancient texts of Ayurveda, like *Charaka Samhita* and the *Sushruta Samhita* is phenomenal. The ancient medical texts of China alone come anywhere near those of India in their knowledge of flora and fauna.





Mineral Wealth of India

India's great mineral wealth makes her probably the third most gifted of the world's regions with respect to industrial capacity. India has abundant, widespread and excellent deposits of iron ore. Proven reserves of Iron ore amount to 12 billion tons; at our present level of production these reserves suffice for 300 years. We have 220 billion tons of coal and lignite. Indian coal has somewhat high ash content, but the reserves are large enough to last us for 750 years at the present level of exploitation.

Amongst the newer metals, India has one of the largest deposits of Bauxite, the ore from which Aluminium is produced. Indian reserves of Titanium ore, Illmenite, are the largest in the world; more than one third of

the world's proven resources of Illmenite are in India. Indian deposits of Rare Earths are second only to that of China. We have large Thorium reserves amounting to 360,000 tons; these reserves are sufficient to establish a nuclear energy capacity of 1 million megawatts and sustain it for 240 years.

India has abundant to medium reserves of most of the essential metallic and non-metallic minerals. Only serious lack is that of petroleum, which has not yet been fully explored. The lack of presently proven deposits of petroleum is largely made up by the abundant availability of sunshine, of coal and of the minerals required for large scale generation of nuclear power.



The Most Populous Country of the World

Having been blessed with such extraordinary natural wealth, it is not surprising that Indian lands have always supported vast multitudes. Indians have been the largest civilisational group in the world till almost the modern times. According to currently accepted scholarship in historical demography, Indian population remained the highest in the world till 1700 AD, with Chinese being a close second.

Ferishta in circa 1600 AD estimated the Indian population prior to 1100 AD at 600 million, when the total population of the European world, according to estimates of western scholars, was merely 100 million. Kautilya's

Arthashastra says that a *grama* should have a hundred to five hundred households, and according to many classical texts, India consists of 5 lakh *gramas*. This means that Indian population in normal times in the classical ages was at least around 50 million households, or about 500 million people, if the Indian ideal of eight children per family is taken seriously.

Indians today constitute only the fourth largest civilisational group in the world, after the Europeans, the Chinese and the Islamic people. Throughout history we have been the major part of humanity. Today we constitute one-sixth of it.





Large Arable Land Per Person

By the current standards of the world, India is not really overpopulated. The number of people per arable hectare of land in India today is almost the same as in Europe, and much less than that in China and Japan. Only very sparsely populated regions of the world like the USA, the former USSR and Australia have considerably lesser people per arable hectare of land than us. And, since we are blessed with perennial rivers and perennial sunshine, and can grow two crops in a year almost everywhere in the country, each hectare of arable land in India is potentially equal to two hectares almost anywhere else in the world.

Region	People/ Arable Ha Y. 1950	People/ Arable Ha Y. 1990
World	1.9	4.0
Asia	3.4	7.5
Europe	4.4	5.9
Africa	1.4	3.9
America	3.4	7.3
Indian Region	2.2	5.5
Indian Union	2.2	5.1
China	6.0	12.2
Japan	20.5	30.2
UK	7.6	8.6
France	2.3	3.2
Italy	5.2	6.4
USA	0.8	1.3
USSR	0.8	1.3



Indian Prosperity Held the World in Thrall

Rivers of unimaginable expanse and depth, vast lands of unheard-of fertility, shining bright sun, large numbers of animals of unusual health and intelligence, and great multitudes of healthy people with immense dignity, everywhere: that is how India has been seen by others throughout the ages. The classical Indian texts, of course, recognise these to be the basic attributes of prosperity in a civilisation. But, the foreigners who came here were also greatly struck by the immensity of the sunshine, lands, rivers, animals and people of India. In the Greek accounts of the campaigns of Alexander, one sees a sudden and remarkable change as Alexander enters the lands on the periphery of India. Alexander, who till then seemed to be passing through almost barren expanses, suddenly begins to encounter one populous kingdom after another, each one strongly defended by its brave people. And, the mood of the narrator, which till that point

seems to be one of dismissive haughtiness, changes to that of awe at the fertility of the lands, the greatness of the rivers, the strength and intelligence of the animals and the bravery of the multitudinous people.

Megasthenes, Pliny, Strabo and other Greek and Roman authors, who wrote about India, all reflect this sense of awe. Even Herodotus, the renowned Greek historian, refers to India as "the most populous nation in the known world". The later accounts of Chinese travelers Fa-Hian and Hiuen Tsiang, who visited India at the time of the Guptas and Harshavardhana respectively, are pervaded by the same sense of awe at the immensity and affluence of Indian lands and her people. Medieval Arab observers and the early European travellers also record the large numbers and the great fertility of India. The images of emasculated Indian lands, animals and people are of rather recent colonial construction.





The Splendid Isolation

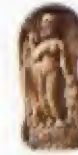
We have not only been blessed with a land of rare fertility and wealth, but also the gods seem to have conspired to make this land into an impregnable fortress.

The Himalayas have for millennia protected the Indian lands from external incursions. In the north, the steep Himalayan Ranges are covered with snow and ice. In the northeast, between Burma and India, an extremely heavy rainfall produces on the sharp mountain slopes and in the deep valleys a dense forest, with impassable streams flowing southwards. Only in the northwest, where the elevation is still high but the rainfall is too scant to produce much vegetation, could entrance to India be gained. Here, however, barren conditions created a sparse population and difficult travel conditions. The northwestern border was therefore easy to defend. The seacoasts of India in the south

are far away from any other major lands and have few natural harbours.

The impassable Himalayas and the unapproachable seacoasts have together endowed India with remarkable isolation from the rest of the world. That is why the Greeks who entered India with Alexander could insist that they had arrived in a land that had never been conquered by others, and that had never coveted to conquer others.

Such splendid isolation has allowed us to live securely within our vast and fertile lands for millennia and thus develop an extraordinarily sophisticated and rich civilisation that in its grandeur and longevity is unlike any other in the world. The achievements of Indian civilisation have indeed been unmatched both in spiritual and social depth, and in material abundance.



The Uniqueness of Indian Culture

India's long geographical isolation explains the uniqueness of Indian culture. Indian ideas and institutions, taken as a whole, resemble those of no other people. They have a peculiar shape and flavour of their own. They have tended to transform and absorb any foreign element that trickled into the region; for India, though politically conquered by outsiders, was never culturally conquered.

This peculiar culture has to some degree penetrated and pervaded nearly every part of what is geographically India. It has everywhere been affected by local, indigenous variations. ...But neither the geographical nor the social barriers inside the subcontinent have been sufficient to prevent the widespread diffusion of a common, basic culture, which despite great variation, is peculiarly Indian.

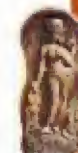
—Kingsley Davis (1951)





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The Civilisation of Harmony and Caring





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India Lives in Harmony with All Creation

India is blessed with the richest lands in the world, enclosed within perhaps the securest geographical frontiers on earth. Notwithstanding the great expanse of her lands, geographically India has the attributes of a fabulous island. It is therefore not surprising that Indians, living securely within their vast and fertile lands for millennia without fear of external aggression or internal scarcity, developed into a homogenous civilisational area. This homogeneous civilisation of India is anchored in the *sanatana dharma*. Living in their splendid and rich isolation, Indians have been at peace with themselves, with nature, and with the world. The *sanatana dharma* enshrines at its heart a sense of deep respect for all aspects of creation. This respect for all creation, and the urge to live in harmony with all, is the defining characteristic of *sanatana dharma*, and therefore, of Indian-ness.



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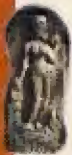
India Sees Unity and Order in All

The deep-seated Indian sense of respect for all creation is anchored in and flows from the Indian view of the Universe as a manifestation of Brahman. Brahman manifests Himself into varied forms of the Universe, and then at the end of a *yuga*, at the end of the current cycle of creation, contracts these manifestations back into Himself. The Universe thus is a mere play of Brahman, a cosmic game of repeated manifestation and retraction of the ultimate essence of the Universe. But it is a play that proceeds according to well-defined cycles of time. Universe is play, but the play is not arbitrary. Even Brahman is governed by Kala. He manifests and retracts according to a definite flow of time that even he cannot transcend.

Every Indian is aware of the Indian view of the World as play of Brahman, and of the supremacy of Kala in this play. Every Indian thus is imbued with a sense of responsible kinship with all aspects of creation, with an awareness of divinity in all sentient and insentient beings, that needs to be not only respected and worshipped but also nurtured and cared for according to the exigencies of the times.

Others have seen gross idolatry in this Indian way of seeing divinity in creation. Indians see in this the only possible way of responsible living on earth.





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Sharing and Caring is the Essence of Indian-ness

Knowing and believing in the essential unity of all creation, the Indians have exalted the responsibility of taking care of all aspects of creation to the level of an inviolable discipline of human life. *Sanatana Dharma* enjoins upon every responsible and capable householder to take out appropriate shares for all aspects of creation that fall within his care, to assuage the hunger of all before sitting down to eat for himself. Those who fail to care and share thus are, from the Indian civilisational perspective, no better than thieves. Sri Krishna Himself has taught the Indians that whatever we obtain is obtained through the graciousness of different aspects of creation, and anyone who enjoys what he obtains, without sharing it with all the others, is indeed a thief. *Tairdattanapradayaibhyo yo bhunkte stena eva sah*. And *Isopanishad* teaches them that whatever there is in the Universe is pervaded by Him, and therefore one may partake of whatever he gets only after sharing it with others: *tena tyaktena bhunjithah*.



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India Cares for Her Own

...Time and again the mourners for Diana and Mother Teresa will say, "Nobody cares, but she cared." This is not only untrue in the rich world but also in India. Begging can only be a huge industry in India because people give. A *sannyasi* can walk from one end of the Subcontinent to the other, with nothing but a loincloth, his staff and a begging bowl, because people will share what little they have with him. In the shabby lanes of urban Bombay at suppertime you may see scores of poor men sitting on the pavements outside restaurants waiting for their free meal of rice and dahl, cooked for them by the restaurant, paid for by the client.

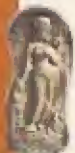
...If the cult of Christian Mother Teresa is fed by contempt for Hindu India, it must do more evil than good. However many people are helped by Mother Teresa and her nuns, there are close to a billion others who will continue to be unfairly judged as unable or unwilling to take care of their own.

—*Germain Greer, 1997 AD*

The nobles and householders of this country have founded hospitals within the city, to which the poor of all countries, the destitute, cripples and the diseased, may repair. They receive every kind of requisite help gratuitously. Physicians inspect their diseases, and according to their cases, order them food and drink, medicine or decoctions, everything in fact that may contribute to their ease. When cured they depart at their ease.

—*Fa-Hian on Magadha, 400 AD*





The *Grihastha* forms the Foundation of Society

Indian civilisation has not only comprehended the essence of the Universe; it has also evolved a social order appropriate for leading life in conformity with that comprehension. The Indian social organisation is thus as peculiarly Indian as the larger Indian view of the Universe.

The primary responsibility of caring for all aspects of creation in the Indian civilisational perspective is placed upon the *grihastha*, the responsible and capable householder. The Mahabharata says that hundreds and thousands of moving and unmoving creatures in the Universe live off what the *grihastha* earns through his righteous actions; and the kings, ministers, soldiers and scholars all depend upon the *grihastha* for their sustenance.

The *grihastha*, the householder along with his family, and not the individual, forms the basic unit of Indian social, economic and moral order.



Woman is the Centre of the Household

The social, economic and moral responsibilities of the *grihastha* are discharged by all members of the household jointly. But the woman, in the Indian civilisational perspective, is central to the household. Mahabharata says that the woman is the household. The Vedas say that she is the queen of the household. And, Manu says that a household begins with marriage, and that the basic duty of the householder of sharing before eating is to be performed by the *dampati*, by the man and the wife together.

The centrality of woman in an Indian household is brought out poignantly by Draupadi's description of her role in the Pandava household. The exalted place of the woman in the Indian household, and consequently in the Indian social, economic and moral order has remained unchanged over time. An early nineteenth century document from Thanjavur describes how the queens of the household undertake feeding of great multitudes in almost the same way as Draupadi of Mahabharata. And Indian women even today take upon themselves the primary responsibility of ensuring the economic, social and moral well-being of the household.





Draupadi-Satyabhama Samvada

In the Vanaparva of Mahabharata, Draupadi describes to Satyabhama her role in the Pandava household thus:

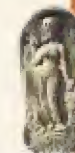
I perform *bhiksha*, *bali* and *sraddha*, the daily giving of food for different aspects of the Universe; I undertake *sthalipaka-yajna*, the cooking of special foods at the appropriate occasions; I offer hospitality to the venerable ones. I perform all these dharmas that are followed in the families...

Carrying pots of food in their hands, a hundred thousand women attendants of Yudhishthira, the wise son of Kunti, used to be engaged in feeding the guests day and night. When Yudhishthira travelled out of Indraprastha, he was followed by a hundred thousand horses and a hundred thousand elephants. This is how things were when Yudhishthira, residing in Indraprastha, looked after the world.

I organised for all these great numbers, paid attention to their requirements, and provided for them. I looked after the inmates of the inner household and all the dependants of the King, including even the cowherds and shepherds. I kept myself informed of all that they did or did not do.

O Satyabhama of great auspiciousness and renown, I alone knew of the incomes and expenses of the King and the Pandava brothers. O Satyabhama of the auspicious visage, they, the bulls of *bharatavamsa*, left the responsibility of the household on me, and engaged themselves in *upasana*, in worship and veneration, and in actions proper to that.

— Mahabharata



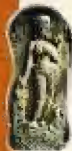
Community and *Grama* form the Nucleus of the State

The *grihasthas* form into myriad groupings around the locality, the profession, the kinship community, or the religious faith. In the Indian perspective, all these spontaneous and organic formations of the society are taken to be inherently legitimate participants in public affairs. All these partake of the attributes of the State. In fact, the activities of these groups—of the community, the *grama* and the *sampradaya*—in their respective domains, and their mutual interactions, constitute public polity in the Indian sense.

Much of what a modern State is expected to do in the sphere of public polity is in India accomplished through these social groupings. Even today the maintenance of public order and provision of social security, two of the most elaborate and expensive functions of the modern State, are performed largely by the family, the community, the *grama* and the *sampradaya*. That is why India today is one of the least policed countries in the world, and yet the rate of violent crime in India is amongst the lowest. The family, community, the *grama* and the *sampradaya* also continue to take care of the elderly, the sick and the destitute. These functions in modern States consume almost one-third of the gross national product of nations.

Continued...





Sanatana Bharat : TIMELESS INDIA
Jāgrita Bharat : RESURGENT INDIA

Community and *Grama* form the Nucleus of the State

Country (2000)	Violent Crime per 100,000 people
USA	439.2
UK	408.0
Germany	137.9
France	152.1
Russia	50.9
Japan	16.5
Indonesia	5.9
China	5.4
India	4.6

...Continued from previous page

It is true that with the impoverishment of Indian society during the long period of subjugation, the families, the *gramas*, the communities and the *sampradayas* are bereft of sufficient resources to carry out these functions with the generosity and care that classical India expects of them. Yet, whatever social security is available to Indian people comes from them. And as we shall see later, these organic groupings of the people have also become the major basis of support for the flowering of Indian enterprise in many spheres.



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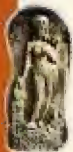
King at the Apex Upholds Dharma

The Society in India governs itself through the family, the community, the *grama*, and the *sampradaya*. The duty of the King who sits at the apex of this self-generating and self-governing polity is to guarantee harmonious functioning of these diverse groupings and institutions of the society in their different domains and roles; and to protect the society from external aggression. The King presents the forbidding face of the society to the outsiders. That face assumes an aspect of benign non-intervention when turned inwards.

With respect to the society the King has no legislative or coercive power. His role is to protect the discipline inherent in various organic groups of the society, to protect *desadharmā*, *jatidharma* and *kuladharmā* of various groups. In fact, along with *prajarakshana*, protection of the people, the other major attribute of the King in Indian civilisational perspective is *lokaranjana*, keeping the society in good humour. The Indian term for the King, *raja*, is derived from this *ranjana* aspect of kingship. The early British observers were indeed surprised to notice that the kings in India took this function so seriously that they often seemed to be in awe of their people.

In addition to performing his duties of protection against external aggression and upholding the customs and discipline of communities, the King in India is expected to behave like a great *grihastha*, who carefully looks after and provides for the welfare of all. In the Mahabharata, Bhishma advises Yudhishthira to become the provider of the unprovided, and to carefully look after those who happen to be under his direct care. Indian Kings always took care to support institutions of hospitality and sharing throughout their empires. The greatly revered Kings of Indian history like Harshavardhana emptied their treasuries at regular intervals, giving away all their wealth for the care of the needy.





The Dharma Rajya of Thanjavur

In a letter of 1801, the Raja of Thanjavur offers the following graphic description of the Chatrams, institutions of hospitality and sharing, of his Rajya.

I will now explain to you the nature and extent of the charities dispensed by them [Chatrams]—

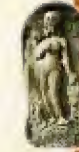
All travellers from the Brahmin to the Pariah inclusive, pilgrims of every description... are fed with boiled rice; those who do not choose to eat the boiled rice receive it unboiled with spices etc. These distributions continue till midnight when a bell is rung and proclamation made requiring all those who have not been fed to appear and take the rice prepared for them.

In each Chatram a teacher to each of the four vedas is appointed, and a schoolmaster, and doctors skilful in the cure of diseases... All the orphans who come to the Chatram are placed under the care of the schoolmaster. They are fed three times a day. Once in four days they are anointed with oil. They receive medicine when they require it, clothes are given to them and the utmost attention paid to them. They are instructed in the sciences to which they may express a preference; and after having obtained a competent knowledge of them the expenses of their marriage are defrayed.

Travellers who fall sick at the Chatram or before their arrival receive medicines and the diet proper for them, and are attended with respect and kindness until their recovery. ...Milk is provided to the infants; pregnant women are entertained with kindness...

The Tanjore country is celebrated over all the world for its charities. It is called Dharma Rajya, and I consider the reputation which reverts upon me through all countries from the appellation, as the most honourable distinction of my rank.

—*Sarfojee Maharaja of Thanjavur, 1801*



Rama Rajya

The State constituted according to the principles of Indian polity, where the organic groupings of the people function unhindered, where the order and discipline inherent in these groupings is protected, is *Rama Rajya*. In such a Rajya the forces of nature also remain in their benign aspect, all is well ordered, everyone is healthy, happy and cared for. Mahakavi Valmiki describes the state of affairs under Rama Rajya thus:

There is happiness and cheer all around. All are contented. All are well-nourished. All follow dharma. All are in good health. All are without disease. And, all are free from fear and hunger.

No parent witnesses the death of a child. No wife witnesses the death of her husband. And, all women are chaste devoted to their husbands.

Fire causes no disasters. No living being ever drowns in water. Winds remain benign. Fevers hold no fear. Nobody has to worry about hunger. Nothing is ever stolen.

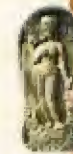
The cities and all parts of the country are laden with grain and all kinds of wealth. Everyone is always happy. It is as if *Kritayuga* has returned.





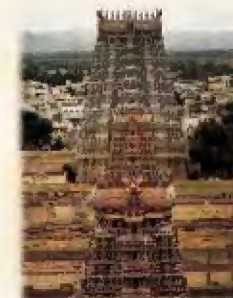
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The Civilisation of Harmony and Caring



Sanatana Bharat : TIMELESS INDIA
Jāgritā Bharat : RESURGENT INDIA

The Civilisation of Harmony and Caring



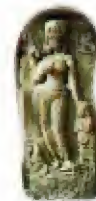


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The Civilisation of Harmony and Caring



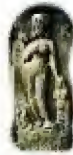
Sanātana Bharat
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A Civilisation of Material Abundance and High Technological Skills





A Land of Abundant Agricultural Yields

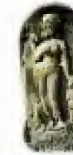
The lands of India have been blessed with great natural fertility, abundant water and unlimited sunshine. The people of India have gratefully accepted these natural blessings. They have, from the most ancient times, developed high agricultural skills to put what nature has so bountifully endowed to the best possible use.

Outsiders arriving into India from the time of Alexander of Macedonia in the fourth century BC to the European observers of the late eighteenth century have all marvelled at the abundance of yields obtained by the Indians; and at the great technological skills displayed by them in all aspects of agriculture including ploughing, manuring, watering, selection of seeds, rotation of crops, fallowing and folding of

lands, etc. They also marvelled at the simple yet optimally efficient tools developed in different parts of India for diverse agricultural operations.

All available historical information indicates that the Indians were till recently the best agriculturists in the world. The yields reported in the inscriptions and by various observers from different parts of India equal the highest possible today.

It is not for nothing that Indian lands are given the adjective of *sasya syamala*, the lands that emit a deep green hue because of the thickness of crops standing on them. It is not for nothing that the Upanishad has taught us the mantra of *Annam Bahu Kurvita, Tadvratam*: ensure an abundance of food, that is the inviolable discipline of mankind.



Historical Estimates of Agricultural Yields in India

Period	Region	Source	Annual Yield Per Hectare
900-1200	Thanjavur	Inscriptions	15-18 tons of Paddy
1100	South Arcot	Inscriptions	14.5 tons of Paddy
1325	Ramanathapuram	Inscriptions	20 tons of Paddy
1807	Coimbatore	European Observer	13.0 tons of Paddy
1803	Allahabad	European Observer	7.5 tons of Wheat and another cereal crop
1770	Chinnambedu (Chengalpattu)	British Survey	9 tons of Paddy
1993	Ludhiana (Punjab)	Government of India	4.3 tons of Wheat and 5.5 tons of Paddy





Agricultural Abundance of India Dazzled the World

Diodorus Siculus (circa 1st Century BC)

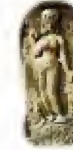
India has many huge mountains which abound in fruit trees of every kind, and many vast plains of great fertility, which are remarkable for their beauty and are supplied with water by a multitude of rivers. The greater part of the soils, moreover, is well watered and bears two crops in the course of a year...

In addition to cereals, there grows throughout India much millet, which is kept well watered by the profusion of river streams, and much pulse of superior quality, and rice also, ...as well as many other plants useful for food, of which most are native to the country. The soils yield, moreover, not a few other edible fruits fit for the subsistence of animals...

It is accordingly confirmed that famine has never visited India, and that there has never been a general scarcity in the supply of nourishing food.

Ibn Batuta (circa 14th Century)

When they have reaped the autumn harvest, they sow spring grains in the same soil in which autumn grains have been sown, for their country is excellent and the soil fertile. As for rice they sow it three times a year...



Agricultural Abundance of India Dazzled the World

François Bernier on Bengal (circa 17th Century)

Egypt has been represented in every age as the finest and most fruitful country in the world, and even our modern writers deny that there is any other land so peculiarly favoured by nature: but the knowledge I have acquired of Bengal, during the two visits paid to that kingdom, inclines me to believe that the pre-eminence of Egypt is rather due to Bengal. The latter country produces rice in such abundance that it supplies not only the neighbouring but also the remote states. It is carried up the Ganga as far as Patna, and exported by sea to Masulipatnam and many other ports on the coast of Coromandel. It is also sent to foreign kingdoms, principally to the island of Ceylon and the Maldives. Bengal abounds likewise in sugar, which it supplies to the kingdom of Golconda and the Karnatic... The three or four kinds of vegetables which together with rice and ghee form the chief food of the common people are purchased for the merest trifle...





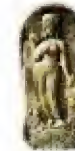
Agricultural Abundance of India Dazzled the World

Alexander Walker on Malabar (Early 19th Century)

In Malabar the knowledge of Husbandry [agriculture] seems as ancient as their History. It is the favourite employment of the inhabitants. It is endeared to them by their mode of life, and the property which they possess in the soil. It is a theme for their writers; it is a subject in which they delight to converse, and with which all ranks profess to be acquainted. They have provided a code of rules for good Husbandry. A system is laid down for the proper cultivation of soils...

One of the most remarkable of the rites of Hindoo worship probably owes its origin to their respect for agriculture. Their sacred Bull, and their superstitious regard for the Cow, have their foundation in the great service they render to Husbandry. Under all these circumstances of favour and encouragement, we should expect that it would be the study of this people to improve the art of cultivating the ground, and that they would in such a length of time have discovered the most convenient and effectual instruments for the purpose...

There is cultivated in Malabar upwards of fifty kinds of rice. They are each distinguished by a separate name, by some peculiar quality, and different modes of cultivation are of course pursued. Some kinds grow on the hills and do not require irrigation... There is one species which is propagated by cuttings, a mode which I never heard of except in Malabar.



Agricultural Abundance of India Dazzled the World

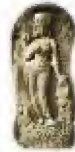
Alexander Walker on Gujarat (Early 19th Century)

In Guzerat... the divisions [of land] are seldom very large and are of unequal sizes according to the judgement, interest, or taste of the proprietor. They are remarkably neat, kept clean and well dressed. These fields have frequently broad grassy margins which are left for pasture, such as are seen in some parts of Yorkshire. The whole world does not produce finer and more beautifully cultivated fields than those in Guzerat. In the neighbourhood of towns, they are commonly planted at the edge, with fruit, and other trees. This gives them the appearance of our Hedge-rows, and they must be compared to the finest parts of England.

This appearance is not peculiar to Guzerat: It may be found in many other countries [parts] of India...

I must repeat that I have seen in India the most abundant crops, 'the corn standing as thick on the ground as the land could well bear it'; fields neat, clean and generally without a weed. Infinite pains are taken to extirpate these, and several ingenious instruments have been contrived for the purpose.





India is the Land of Irrigation

India has through the ages been the land of irrigation. Nature has endowed India with abundant waters, but a large part of the water is received during the relatively short rainy season. Therefore, it has been always necessary for India to carefully husband the waters she receives; to collect, store, divert and channel the rains such that the lands are sated before the water flows down to the seas.

Indian civilisation has from ancient times imposed upon the kings and the people the responsibility to carefully tend to

the wells, canals and tanks so that the agriculture is not left merely to the mercy of the rain-gods. In the Ramayana, Srirama asks Bharata to ensure that agriculture in Kosala does not become *devamatrika*, dependent on rains alone. And, in the Mahabharata, Narada solicitously asks Yudhisthira:

"Have you ensured that in every part of the land large irrigation tanks have been constructed, that these are brimming with water, and that agriculture is not left to the mercy of the gods of rain alone?"



Largest Irrigated Area in the World

Indian people and kings have always followed the advice of Ramayana and Mahabharata. In every period of Indian history, great kings of India have constructed great irrigation works. The legendary Karikala Chola of the *Sangam* period constructed *Kallanai*, the grand anicut, at the point where the river Kollidam branches off from Kaveri. The anicut is the life-line of the rich and fertile Kaveri valley even today. According to an inscription of 1st Century AD, the Saka Rudradaman of Junagarh got the vast Sudarsana Lake near Girnar repaired; the Lake is known to have been constructed by the Mauryas.

Similar examples can be gleaned from all parts of India throughout Indian history.

Even today India is the most irrigated region in the world. India has the largest irrigated area, and enough irrigation potential to double it.

Country Irrigated Area in
(1998) million hectares

World	271.4
India	59.0
China	52.6
USA	21.4
Europe	17.1

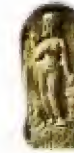




The Erys of South India

The Indian technical ingenuity in evolving simple techniques that are sophisticated enough to take advantage of the full complexity of the local situation, and meshing these locally adapted techniques into impressively large systems, can be best seen in the tank irrigation system of South India. The whole of South India is dotted with these tanks. A British expert writing in the 1850's estimated the total number of such tanks in the Madras Presidency to be over 50,000. Another estimate indicated that in the eighteenth century there were more than 38,000 tanks in the region that later constituted the Mysore State. The state had an area of around 29,000 square miles. It is, therefore, a fair estimate that there were over a lakh tanks in the whole of South India. These tanks were constructed and maintained by local effort. Together they formed a closely-knit whole so that the outflow from the one at a higher level supplied the one at a lower level, and so on. This chain of tanks was so complete and inter-related within itself that British engineers of the nineteenth century felt that it would have been impossible to add another tank to the chain or to take out one from it.

*—Cambridge Encyclopedia of India, Pakistan,
Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, 1989*



Textiles: The Great Industrial Enterprise of India

Textiles formed the great industrial enterprise of pre-British India. Up to 1800, India was the world's leading producer and exporter of textiles; China was a close second.

Spinning of yarn was an activity in which perhaps the whole of India participated. According to an observer from Manchester, Arno Pearse, who visited India in 1930 to study its cotton industry, there were 5 crore spinning wheels (*Charkhas*) intermittently at work even then. And this simple small wheel was so efficient that till the early decades of the nineteenth century a widowed mother could still maintain a whole family in

reasonable manner by spinning on the *Charkha* for a few hours a day.

Weaving was a relatively more specialised activity. However, the number of those belonging to the weaver castes was smaller in comparison only to those from the cultivating castes. Various estimates indicate that the weavers formed more than 5 percent of the Indian population. Early nineteenth century data for certain districts of South India indicate that there were around 20,000 looms in a district on the average. Arno Pearse in 1930 estimated the number of handlooms operating in India to be in the vicinity of 20 lakhs.





Textiles: The Great Craft of India

India was renowned in the world for her great artistry, skill and sophistication in all aspects of textile manufacture. There were vast regions of India that specialised in specific types of fabrics. Each of these regions had its own specialised techniques of weaving, bleaching, dyeing and painting etc. And, each had its own characteristic designs, motifs and symbols. For example, in Western India, Sironj in Rajasthan and Burhanpur in Khandesh were major centres of cotton painting; cheap printed cottons came from Ahmedabad; woollens including the extraordinary Cashmere Shawls were produced in Kashmir; true silks were worked as *Patolas* at Patan in Gujarat and so on.

These dispersed and diverse techniques were so optimised that textiles produced in Britain through the technologies of industrial revolution could hardly match the Indian textiles in quality or price. Till the early nineteenth century, the British mill-produced fabrics were protected from Indian competition by the imposition of duties of 70 to 80 per cent on the cottons and silks imported from India, or by positive prohibition. The historian H. H. Wilson noted that without such prohibitive duties and decrees, "the mills of Paisley and Manchester would have been stopped in their outset and could scarcely have been again set in motion even by the power of steam."



India Excelled in Iron and Steel Making

Iron ore is found in almost the whole of India south of the Sindhu-Ganga plains. And iron smelting was widely practised throughout this region from the earliest times to almost the present. Iron smelting communities can be found up to today even on the northern side of the Kaimur Hills. And one can see slag heaps formed by centuries of iron smelting activity in hundreds of villages in the plateau and the peninsula. Scores of European accounts of Indian manufacture of iron and steel are available. These accounts refer to almost a hundred districts spread all over India. It is estimated that the number of furnaces in India towards the latter half of the eighteenth century was over 10,000 and these had the potential to produce 2 lakh tonnes of iron annually.

Throughout history, Indian steel has been renowned in the world for its extraordinary high quality and sophistication. Alexander of Macedonia was proud of having received 100 'talents' of steel from Pururavas of Takshashila in the fourth century BC. The West was acquainted with Indian iron and steel fairly early through the celebrated Damascus swords, which were invariably forged from the famed Indian *wootz* steel. And Michael Faraday—one of the greatest British scientists of the nineteenth century who carried out experiments on electricity that proved momentous in the discovery of the laws of electromagnetism—was fascinated with Indian *wootz* steel and used it for several purposes.





The Iron Pillar of Delhi

All over India, one can find scattered iron pillars and girders of very large dimensions and of very high quality. The Iron Pillar at Mehrauli in Delhi is an especially noteworthy example. It has dazzled metallurgists with its sheer size and its resistance to corrosion. The pillar is 24.2 feet high, and has a diameter of 16.4 inches at the base. It weighs 6 tons. And, it has withstood the ravages of time for more than 1500 years without any visible sign of rusting or decay. Metallurgists of the world have marvelled at the sophistication of smelting and iron-making technology that could produce iron of such quality. And, they have wondered at the skills of foundry and erection that allowed the Indians to forge such a large and heavy piece of metal at that early age.

Looking at the Iron Pillar of Delhi, a late nineteenth century British observer remarked, "It is not many years since the production of such a pillar would have been an impossibility in the largest foundries of the world, and even now there are comparatively few places where similar mass of metal could be turned out." This was in 1881, more than a hundred years after the onset of the industrial revolution in Britain.



A Civilisation of Material Abundance and High Technological Skills

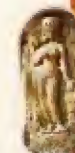


Iron Pillar photo R. Balasubramanian



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A Civilisation of Material Abundance and High Technological Skills



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A Functioning Indian Polity: Chengalpattu 1770





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Chengalpattu: The Polity

From the perspective of today, the affluence, caring and sophistication of India seem an unattainable ideal of some distant past. Fortunately, there is detailed information available about the way indigenous society, economy and polity were organised in the 1770's, in about two thousand localities of the Chengalpattu District of Tamil Nadu, just before the British set about disrupting and reorganising India according to their own ways and preferences.

The Chengalpattu information shows how the classical Indian view of the world—with its emphasis on seeing divinity and dignity in all sentient and insentient creation; on caring and providing for the needs of all; on painstakingly earning an affluence from nature and sharing it with all; on vesting the family, the community and the locality with the freedom and responsibility to organise their own affairs according to their own time-honoured discipline and customs—was made manifest in the institutions and practices of the society and the polity. It shows how such institutions and practices anchored in the *sanātana dharma*, in the Indian civilisational genius, continued to provide an affluent and fulfilling life for the people of India till as late as the latter part of the eighteenth century.



Sanātana Bharat : TIMELESS INDIA
Jagrītā Bharat : RESURGENT INDIA

Chengalpattu: High Agricultural Affluence

Chengalpattu localities of the eighteenth century produced, on the average, 5 tons of grains a year for a household. Since the number of persons per household was recorded to have been between 4 and 5, there was a ton of grain per person. This level of grain availability indicates a very high level of prosperity. India today produces one-fifth of a ton per person. The nations that are considered highly affluent today, like the USA, boast of per capita grain availability equalling that of the Chengalpattu of 1770's.

This amount of grain can be produced and consumed only in a society that supports high animal wealth and takes good care of its animals. Every household of Chengalpattu had about 3 heads of cattle on the average. Today we have no more than 1 head of cattle per household, and the animals receive an almost negligible share in the meagre grain produce of India.

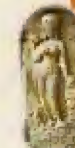




Chengalpattu: High Agricultural Practices

Chengalpattu falls in the coastal region, where fertility of land is not comparable to that in the great alluvial plains of India. And in the 1770's, the English and the French armies were rampaging through the region, disrupting its economy and polity. At that period the Chengalpattu region obtained an average yield of 2.5 tons of grain per hectare. Around sixty relatively better-endowed localities of the region, which between them contributed one third of the grain produce and one-sixth of the cultivation of the region, had an average yield of 4.5 tons per hectare. Of these, several fairly large localities reached the level of 9.0 tons per hectare.

This kind of yield is possible only when a society has achieved sophistication in every aspect of agricultural technology. The technological competence of Chengalpattu society is demonstrated best in the irrigation system of the area. In this coastal area, where the land slopes away sharply towards the sea, they made the waters tarry and irrigate their paddies, through the famed network of *erys*. The detailed maps of Chengalpattu seem to be splashed with the blue of the *erys*; about one-sixth of the land of the region was under various water bodies. Scholars believe that this spread of water and the consequent high humidity regime was the key to the extraordinary high productivity of several of the localities in the region.



Chengalpattu: High Industrial Affluence

Like the rest of India before the coming of the British, Chengalpattu was not an exclusively agricultural society; it was equally an industrial society. Of about seventy thousand households of the region, only half were exclusively agricultural. Of the other half, at least twenty percent were involved in industrial and manufacturing activities. Weavers alone constituted 6.5 percent of the households; another about 10 percent were engaged in activities like metal-working, stone-masonry, pottery, carpentry, cotton-refining, iron smelting and smithy, leather working, oil pressing, etc. And, every household, including those of the cultivators, contributed to spinning.

About one third of the households were engaged in what are called the service activities today. Every locality maintained a large complement of households engaged in these. The services provided by them included: Administrative services of the locality registrar and the corn-measurer; militia services of the *palayakkarar* and *tookir*; economic services of the *vetti*, who maintained the *erys* and arranged the distribution of waters; cultural services of the temple servants, schoolmasters, the musicians and the dancers; the hygiene and health services of the barbers, washermen and doctors; and the intellectual services of high scholars and holy personages.



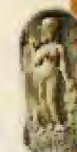


Chengalpattu: The Polity of Sharing

The Chengalpattu polity was organised around the principle of sharing: Growing an abundance on the lands and sharing it widely, such as to effectively provide for all the households and institutions associated with the locality and the region, formed the basic premise and the major instrument of political, moral and economic organisation.

At the time of harvest every locality of the region undertook an elaborate exercise of sharing. The households and institutions engaged in the provision of administrative, military, cultural, economic, intellectual, and health and hygiene services were all given their share in the produce. Most of them received shares from the locality they served; but institutions that served the whole region, like the great temples, the great militia leaders and high scholars, received shares from hundreds of localities in the region.

This sharing was not nominal. About a third of the produce of a locality was shared thus. The sharing in its elaboration was akin to the budgeting mechanism of the State: Through such sharing the locality allocated resources for different functions essential to itself, and also provided for the larger polity of the region. The locality thus became not only the basic constituting unit, but also the constituting authority of the polity.



Chengalpattu: Where Community was King

The locality was the constituting unit and authority of the Chengalpattu polity. And, the locality was constituted of the communities. The sharing arrangements, which constituted the main instrument of legitimisation in the polity, do not mention individuals, not even individual households. It is the locality that takes out shares, and these are taken out for specific institutions and functions that are looked after by specific communities. For example, the locality takes out a share for the function of the barber, and how this share is distributed between different households in the community of barbers in the locality is the business of the community.

It seems as if the Chengalpattu polity had worked out a way of sharing sovereignty among the localities and the communities. Such sharing of the attributes of sovereignty amongst many is the cherished ideal of Indian polity. Rama Rajya for the Indians is always the period when Rajakulas, the sharers in sovereignty, multiply several fold and all of them are allowed to blossom and flourish.

This is how the classical ideas of sharing and providing for all, and of allowing a share in the responsibility and dignity of running the public affairs to all communities and groups, were incorporated in the functioning polity of Chengalpattu.





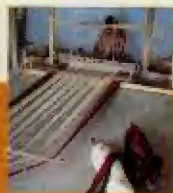
Thirupporur: A Capital of the Communities

Halfway down the old road from Chennai to Mahabalipuram, one suddenly comes across a breathtakingly grand temple on the banks of an equally grand large square tank. For someone passing on this road for the first time, the sight is too magnificent to be missed.

This is the Kandasami Temple of Thirupporur. Thirupporur today is a small town of about five thousand persons. In the eighteenth century, Thirupporur was one of the capital cities of the region; the Kandasami Temple enjoyed a share in the produce of more than 250 localities. As many as forty-six communities of the region had their *mathams* here. These were institutions of high learning; they also received the temple honours on behalf of the community, provided a place of stay for the pilgrims and arranged for the performance of various rituals connected with pilgrimage. The *mathams* thus were the embassies of the local communities in this capital city of the region. The *mathams* were all located in the four streets around the temple, making it the capital complex.

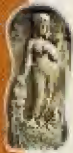
It was through institutions and complexes like these that the localities and communities of Chengalpattu came together to constitute higher levels of polity. And, while coming together thus they also created high architecture and high culture, which is so obviously visible in the grandeur of the Thirupporur Temple and the carefully laid out plan of this town.

In the two thousand localities of Chengalpattu, there were at least a hundred temples of the size and grandeur of the Kandasami Temple of Thirupporur.



A Functioning Indian Polity: Chengalpattu 1770



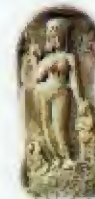


Sānatana Bharat : TIMELESS INDIA
Jāgrita Bharat : RESURGENT INDIA

A Functioning Indian Polity: Chengalpattu 1770



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The British Interregnum



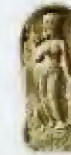


India Goes into Eclipse

The British began establishing a foothold in India from the mid-eighteenth century, by the mid-nineteenth they had taken over the administration of the whole of India; and they continued to rule India for another hundred years. India had suffered foreign invaders and rulers earlier, especially since the beginning of the second millennium of Christ. Those invasions lowered the vitality and dignity of India; but they could not subdue the Indian spirit. Indians continued to be proud of the affluence of their lands, and the superiority of their civilisation. In their mind, they remained steadfast in *sanatana dharma*, in their time tested and timeless civilisational discipline and pursuits.

The British interregnum led to great neglect of the wealth that nature has so bountifully

bestowed upon India; and the high skills of the Indian people of converting the nature's bounty to material and social affluence began to rust away. But more than the material decline, the British period led to an eclipse of the soul of India. Perhaps for the first time in their long history, Indians began to entertain doubts about the truth and superiority of their time honoured ways and preferences. Mahatma Gandhi did reawaken the Indian spirit to an extent through his emphasis on *swadeshi* and *swadharma*; but the stupor introduced by the British is yet to disappear entirely. India needs a new and vigorous movement in favour of *swadeshi* and *swadharma* to come out of this phase of eclipse and begin to shine across the world once again.



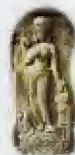
Agriculture Goes into Precipitous Decline

The great agricultural affluence of India was perhaps the first to be affected by the British rule. The affluence was based upon painstaking tending of the lands, careful husbanding of the waters, and affectionate upkeep of the animals. Under the British, all this became impossible. Productivity of agriculture in the Chengalpattu region, which was one of the first parts of India to come under British administration, began to decline almost immediately. In 1770's, Chengalpattu produced 2.5 tons per hectare and the yield had remained around that level up to 1780's, in spite of the devastating wars of the period. But by 1798, within

a few years of direct British administration, productivity had declined to a mere 630 kg per hectare.

Agriculture in all parts of India suffered the same fate. It is generally agreed that throughout the nineteenth century agricultural productivity in India either declined or stagnated at a low level. Detailed statistical information began to be collected from 1890 onwards, and it indicates a continuing decline up to 1947. At the end of the British rule, the average yield of paddy in India had declined to one ton per hectare, wheat to 650 kg per hectare, and coarse grains to far below that figure.





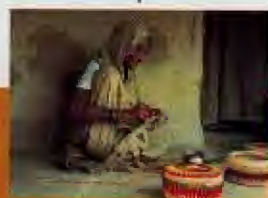
Scarcity takes the Place of Plenty

India has always been a land of abundance in grain. This abundance was soon replaced by acute scarcity under the British. Perhaps for the first time in her long history, India failed to produce enough food for her people and animals. And devastating famines began to visit large parts of India decade after decade.

Chengalpattu District of Tamil Nadu produced a ton of grain per capita in the 1770's. Detailed statistical data collected in 1890 showed per capita production in the country to be merely 200 kg.

At the time of independence production of grain in India was at an alarmingly low level of 150 kg per capita per year.

The Famine Commission of 1880 had determined that a minimum of 200 kg per capita of foodgrains was required to keep people from starving. India today produces just about 200 kg per capita per year. We are still far away from the abundance of pre-British India. We have still not been able to undo the effects of two centuries of subjugation under the British.



Industry and Manufacture are Wiped Out

Agriculture went into decline during the British rule, while the Indian industry was totally wiped out. Chengalpattu District of Tamil Nadu, for which detailed data are available, had only half its population engaged exclusively in agriculture in the 1770's. The census of 1870 showed that 80 percent of the people of Chengalpattu had become entirely dependent on agriculture. Such was the decline of opportunities in the industrial and service activities.

Up to 1800 India was the largest producer and exporter of textiles. Within the first three decades of the nineteenth century, Indian textiles were completely wiped out from the international markets. The pages of history are blackened with the

accounts of severe suffering of the unemployed spinners and weavers of Bengal in the first half of the nineteenth century.

In 1750 India produced a quarter of the manufactures of the world; and even in 1800, India held one-fifth share in the world manufacturing output. However, by 1860 the share of India had declined to 8.6 percent, it further declined to 2.8 percent in 1880 and 1.4 percent in 1913. Such was the level of de-industrialisation of India. India's share in the gross product of the world declined from 22.6 percent in 1700, to 15.7 percent in 1820, 11.0 percent in 1890 and 3.8 percent in 1952. China and other countries of the world that came under European grip also suffered similar decline.





India Loses its Share in the World Population

With agriculture and industry suffering precipitous decline, India began to lose its predominant position in the population of the world. Even in 1700, Indians formed the largest civilisational group in the world. They constituted 26% of the world population, ahead of the Chinese at 23%. By 1820 the share of the Indian region in the world population had declined to 20%, in 1900 it declined further to 14%. In 1950, at the end of the British interregnum, the Indian share had somewhat improved to 17.5%.

Not only the Indians, but all the non-European people suffered severe decline in their presence in the world during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For most of history, the Europeans were a relatively small group in the world. It is only from 1500 AD onwards, with the beginning of American colonisation, that the Europeans began to grow, but their numbers remained below those of the Indians and the

Chinese till 1750. By 1875, the people of European stock became the largest civilisational group in the world; and in 1925, at the peak of western imperialism, their numbers reached more than double that of the Indians and about one and a half times that of the Chinese. Thus in about 200 years the complexion of the world was changed; a world that was dominated by the Indians and the Chinese, became a European world.

The recent rise in population of India and China, as also of the rest of Asia and Africa, represents a natural restoration of balance between the numerical strength of different civilisations. The Indian growth in this recent period, though impressive, is not the most spectacular. Other Asians and the Africans have grown at a pace faster than we have. Notwithstanding this growth, people of European stock continue to be a third of the world population and the largest group in the world.



India Comes into Her Own





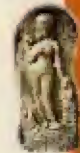
India begins to Come into Her Own

Mahatma Gandhi reawakened the spirit of India. Under his leadership India aroused great expectations in the world.

On gaining Independence, we could not entirely fulfil the high expectations the world had from us. But, we began the task of restoring our lands and our society to some state of health in earnest. People of India began to improve their lands and their agriculture. The craftsmen and artisans began reviving the manufacture and industry. The State began to pay attention to rebuilding the infrastructure. Roads were laid. Some attention was paid to reviving the rivers. Big irrigation works were undertaken. Some large steel plants were built.

The State also began some effort to correct the land relations that had been severely distorted. Attention was paid to improving availability of education, especially at the higher levels. Efforts were made to bring India up to date with the world in matters of modern science and technology.

The fact of being Independent, and the invigorating experience of having participated in the great and righteous struggle for freedom, restored the initiative and the dignity of the Indian people, and they began a revival of their country and their society.



Revival of Agriculture and Population

After Independence, agricultural production and productivity began to improve quickly, especially during the first 15 years. Soon production of food rose to the level of 200 kg per capita per year: sufficient to keep gross hunger and famines at bay, though not enough to provide two square meals to all Indians or to properly feed our animals. We have managed to keep the production of food at this level for our rising population. We are still far from the historical abundance of India.

With the devastating famines of the British times having become a matter of the past, and with the people and their communities regaining some level of initiative, dignity and affluence, Indian population began to rise. And, India's share in the population of the world, that was on the decline for two centuries, began to be restored to some extent.



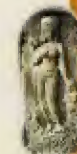


Revival of Industry and Manufacture

On achieving Independence, India began a conscious effort to re-industrialise. The State took up the task of creating the necessary infrastructure; of producing and supporting the production of steel, coal, petroleum, electricity, cement etc.; and of building communication and transportation networks. In all these sectors, India made large strides within the first two decades of independent functioning. Thus the basis of an industrial revival of India was laid, though our efforts in all these sectors seem to have slackened at some stage.

The people of India took hold of the opportunities of revival offered to them. The scientists and technologists attained significant success in mastering the new technologies and bringing India abreast with the world, especially in the fields of nuclear technology, rocketry and missiles, metallurgy and materials. India today is on the frontier of technology in many of these areas. India's leadership position in the field of information technology today is grounded in these earlier successes in high technology areas.

Indian entrepreneurs made use of the industrial infrastructure to substantially increase production of various goods, such that today India produces almost every industrial product that the people need. And, India exports large quantities of manufactured products, especially textiles, leather goods, machinery and chemicals.



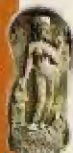
Revival of the Family and Community Enterprise

The families and communities of India made effective use of the newly opening opportunity for industrial enterprise. Utilising their age-old traditions of mutual support, implicit faith and internal discipline, and with little help from the State or its various agencies, the families and communities in different regions took to a variety of industrial enterprises with great success. Agriculture in any case has remained entirely in their hands.

The public and the corporate sector together today contribute only about one-third of the gross domestic product of India. The remaining two-thirds is contributed by the family and community enterprises, including agriculture. Ninety percent of the Indian work force is employed in these enterprises. The public sector and corporate private sector employ only about 2.7 crore people today; the remaining about 27 crores of the work force of India finds sustenance in the family and community enterprises. And, even the private corporate sector of India is largely anchored in families and communities.

As in the past, India is once again being rebuilt through the enterprise and discipline of the families and the communities.





Communities Create Spectacular Success Stories

In certain pockets of India, the family and community enterprise has achieved spectacular success. Ludhiana, Gobindagarh and Batala in Punjab; Coimbatore, Tiruppur, Sivakasi, Bhavani and Namakkal in Tamil Nadu; Morvi, Rajkot and Surat in Gujarat; Bhiwandi and Sholapur in Maharashtra and several other towns in other states have turned into extraordinarily efficient and active centres of specific industries through such enterprise. The bicycles of Ludhiana, the lathes of Batala, the hosiery of Tiruppur, the fireworks of Sivakasi, the clocks of Morvi, and cut diamonds of Surat dominate the Indian market today and form a substantial proportion of Indian exports.

These success stories are built entirely through dispersed small-scale indigenous enterprise supported and promoted by the families and communities. Such enterprise has transformed entire towns, cities and regions, and turned them into islands of prosperity. There are no unemployed workers in Ludhiana, Coimbatore, Tiruppur or Sivakasi. Workers gravitate towards these towns from far and wide; and having arrived, they soon turn into entrepreneurs themselves, with the extensive opportunities that are available, and with the support and resources of their families and communities.

This is *swadeshi* enterprise at its best. India would be a prosperous country, if only we could replicate the story of these centres of enterprise and excellence in every region and district of India.



Success Stories: Hosiery Exporters of Tiruppur

About 40 kilometers from Coimbatore, situated in the usual rural ambience of India's small towns, is the small town of Tiruppur. On the surface, nothing distinguishes Tiruppur from any other suburban town of India. Even the bold hoardings, advertising hosiery garments, do not seem very different from what is seen in other towns. And the lanes and by-lanes of Tiruppur seem quiet and sleepy.

But Tiruppur is the centre of hosiery manufacture in India. The town manufactures hosiery garments worth Rs.5000 crore a year and the exports of Tiruppur amount to almost Rs.3000 crore. In every one of the houses in those quiet lanes of the town, there is happening some activity or the other connected with the hosiery industry. There is none unemployed in Tiruppur town; in fact there is scarcity of workers throughout the Coimbatore District, of which Tiruppur is just one town.

The turnover of Tiruppur is comparable to that of the largest automobile manufacturer of India, and is several times that of some of the largest textile mills. The export earnings of Tiruppur are of course incomparably larger.

This level of industrial activity is created by small entrepreneurs who began a few decades ago by investing their meagre savings in tiny units. They have created this hugely successful industrial centre through personal diligence and through mutual support, envy and emulation that are so typical of small town communities. In this sense, Tiruppur is a bright example of an entirely *swadeshi* enterprise.





Success Stories: Match and Fireworks of Sivakasi

Sivakasi is situated in the extremely dry belt of southern Tamil Nadu. This belt, consisting of parts of Virudunagar, Tutukudi and Ramanathapuram districts, falls in the rain-shadow of the Western Ghats and is away from the Eastern Ghats; so it receives neither the summer nor the winter rains. Within this dry belt, Sivakasi and towns around it have a specially hot and dry climate, because they are the farthest from the sea.

The people of Sivakasi have converted this natural disadvantage into a special advantage, by developing match and fireworks industry. Almost all the fireworks that India uses in large quantities, especially on the festive occasion of Diwali, are produced in Sivakasi and a few towns around it. And, almost all the matches are produced here.

The industry was started in the 1920's in a small way by two enterprising Nadars, who had learnt the technology while engaged in business at Calcutta. The community mechanisms of mutual support, envy and emulation, and the congenial climate of the region, soon made it the centre of all match and fireworks production.

The match industry of the region today has a turnover of about Rs.1000 crore. The fireworks industry contributes another Rs.450 crore. And, in order to meet the demand of labels for the fireworks, a huge printing industry has sprung up, making Sivakasi one of the major centres of high quality colour printing in India.

Thus has community based small town *swadeshi* enterprise turned a naturally deprived region into one of the richest parts of the country.



Success Stories: Matchworks of Kovilpatti and Sattur

Sivakasi was the first to engage in the match and fireworks industry; the units of Sivakasi have now graduated to larger scale and higher technology production. Kovilpatti, Sattur and other towns nearby manufacture matches at the cottage and tiny scale, though there are a few bigger units in these towns also. Almost every house in these towns is a matchworks unit.

Making of matches is a highly labour intensive work. The sticks have to be first individually filled in wooden frames. The frames are dipped in wax and ignition compounds by hand. Empty matchboxes are made manually, and the sides of the boxes are painted by hand to prepare the striking surface. The finished matches are taken out from the frames and filled into these boxes and labels are stuck on individual boxes, by hand. And finally the matchboxes are hand-packed into larger wholesale packages.

Almost all households of the region are involved in performing these various operations. The frame-filling work is often carried out at homes. The empty frames are delivered to the homes and filled frames are collected back. Thus the industry has converted not only the towns but also the entire region into an industrial hub.





Towns form the Backbone of Industry

Industrial towns like Tiruppur, Sivakasi, Sattur and Kovilpatti of Tamil Nadu form the backbone of an industrialised nation. It is in such towns that the technological and entrepreneurial skills of a people find their widest expression. Great industrial empires grow from such family and community based enterprise and skill blossoming in small towns.

The people of these towns are raring to take on the world. The young people of Tiruppur keep themselves abreast of the changing trends and technologies in the international garment markets. They know all about the weaknesses and strengths of their international competitors. They are ready to dominate the world markets, if only they could find proper encouragement.

Similarly, fireworks manufacturers of Sivakasi have strenuously tried to upgrade their technologies and work environments. The larger fireworks factories of Sivakasi are a pleasure to watch for the attention they pay to cleanliness and safety of operations. And the manufacturers are so keen to take on the competition in the world that they sent a representative to China to learn about the ways of their main competitor.

It is such concerted enterprise that builds great nations. There are some 25 towns in India where more than 60 percent of the population is employed in industry, and which are as intensely industrialised as the towns we have described. India is being re-industrialised in these towns. Their success is anchored in the *swadeshi* spirit, and this spirit shall certainly lead to the multiplication of such success stories.



Intensely Industrial Towns of Tamil Nadu*

District	Town	Population	Percentage in Industry
Chengalpattu	Kanchipuram UA	1,71,730	44
North Arcot	Arcot UA	1,14,760	48
	Gudiyattam UA	90,560	53
	Vaniyambadi UA	92,310	43
Dharmapuri	Hosur	41,740	49
Tiruvannamalai	Arani	54,900	43
Salem	Salem UA	5,78,290	45
	Tiruchengodu	63,030	51
Tiruchirapally	Karur UA	1,13,670	41
Erode	Erode UA	3,61,750	44
	Bhawani UA	97,160	68
Coimbatore	Coimbatore UA	11,00,750	45
	Tiruppur UA	3,06,240	68
Dindigul	Chinnalapatti	22,870	45
Virudunagar	Rajapalayam	1,14,200	40
	Sivakasi UA	1,02,170	67
	Aruppukkottai	78,980	55
Tuttukudi	Kovilpatti	78,830	50

*Towns with 40% or more of Workforce in Industry; UA: Urban Agglomerate





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India Comes into Her Own



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Much Remains to be Done





Bureaucracy Constrains the Enterprise

Since Independence, several towns of India have developed into centres of intense and highly successful industrial activity through family and community based enterprise. People of India everywhere else have been trying their best to emulate them and create opportunities for the expression of their entrepreneurial and industrial skills. Yet the success stories have remained limited to a few towns; and even in the most successful of these the young people find their efforts to grow, to rise to the world-level in technology and scale, and to take on the world as equals, constrained in various ways.

The most irritating and debilitating constraints are

offered by the bureaucratic structures of India. The British had designed these structures to curb the initiative of the Indian people at every level. We have continued with these. A small-scale industrialist of Tamil Nadu estimates that his colleagues have to bear meddling by 43 different inspectors, have to maintain 165 kinds of registers and forms, and obtain approvals from 22 statutory authorities. On the other hand, the fireworks manufacturer of Sivakasi who visited China found that to set up and run a fireworks factory a local entrepreneur there needed a single-point clearance from the local police.



Our Metropolitan Elite Remains Hostile

The English educated metropolitan elite thinks of the town based entrepreneurs, anchored in their families and communities, as obstacles in progress. Instead of using their modern knowledge and resources to help upgrade the technological competence of these enterprises, they either ignore them altogether or put all kinds of hurdles in their way.

Making fireworks is a highly skilful enterprise, requiring specialised technical and scientific knowledge. To help fireworks entrepreneurs upgrade their knowledge and skill, Beijing University runs courses in pyrotechnics. The elite of India, on the other hand, has been looking for ways of reversing the success story of Sivakasi fireworks manufacturers. Members of the metropolitan elite have been for

years running a concerted campaign against the Sivakasi fireworks industry, alleging that it thrives on child labour. And now when the Sivakasi manufacturers have conclusively proved that no children are employed in their units, the same elite has begun a new campaign directed against fireworks as such, claiming that bursting of crackers on just one day of the year to celebrate the greatest festival of India constitutes a great environmental hazard.

The metropolitan elite of India, instead of becoming a partner in the *swadeshi* enterprise based in the families and the communities, has positioned itself as an adversary of *swadeshi*. And that perhaps is the greatest constraint on the growth of Indian industry and economy.





Globalisation Poses New Threats

The *swadeshi* entrepreneurs of India were working in difficult conditions, somehow building success against all odds posed by the meddling bureaucracy and the hostile city-based elite. The unthinking globalisation of the economy has brought them face to face with new dangers.

Entrepreneurs everywhere in India are looking towards the future with concern. Those in Tiruppur say that till now they have been ploughing back every rupee of their profits into the expansion and upgradation of their enterprise. But, for the last year or so, they have been wondering whether, with the new global trade regime in textiles looming on the horizon, it would be wise to invest further. The Sivakasi fireworks manufacturers are worried about the Chinese competition not only in the international but also in the

Indian market. Similar fears are being expressed by all kinds of entrepreneurs everywhere.

The Indian State and the Indian elite have forced the *swadeshi* enterprise into global competition without offering the kind of help and support other countries offer their entrepreneurs. Other countries aggressively protect their entrepreneurs against the negative effects of global trade. Since the coming into force of the new global trade regime, the USA and the European Union have imposed anti-dumping measures in hundreds of instances. But we hardly take notice when the whole industrial enterprise of towns and regions comes under threat of extinction.

Such callousness and neglect threaten to prematurely abort the great Indian revival that began with Independence.



Swadeshi is the Key to Indian Revival





Current State of Indian Economy

Since Independence, people in different parts of India have made great efforts to rebuild Indian economy, using the natural resources of India and the civilisational capital manifest in our families and communities to the best extent possible. The scientists and technologists of India have put in their best efforts: With their help India has become one of the few countries in the world to learn and work with frontline technologies in fields like nuclear and space sciences. Indian State has invested large sums in putting together the infrastructure necessary for building a buoyant modern economy. Indian corporate sector has set up several successful enterprises requiring large investments, sophisticated technologies and high financial and management skills.

Yet, Indian economy has not reached a level commensurate with the dimensions, natural endowments and civilisational heritage of India. By most indicators of economic prosperity, India remains far behind other comparable nations of the world. Our per capita production and consumption of food, iron and steel, cement, electricity, coal, and other basic products, remains low in comparison with other major nations of the world.

The constraints of bureaucratic meddling, of elite hostility, and of naïveté in the game of globalisation are, to some extent, responsible for Indian economy remaining behind others. We, as the inheritors of a civilisation that for millennia surpassed the world in all fields of human endeavour, must sit down and think hard about how to regain the glory that rightfully belongs to our land and our people.



Comparative State of Indian Economy

	India	China	USA	Year
Population (millions)	1014	1285	278	2000
Percentage of World	16.7	21.2	4.6	2000
Foodgrains (mn tons)	197	397	348	1998
Foodgrains (kg/capita)	201	314	1272	1998
Foodgrains (kg/hectare)	1600	4100	5600	1998
Steel Crude (mn tons)	18	80	84	1992
Coal (mn tons)	267	1141	856	1993
Electricity (bn kwh)	300	740	3075	1992
Cement (mn tons)	50	245	65	1991
Crude Oil (mn tons)	30	140	420	1993
TV Sets (million)	57	300	204	1995
Foreign Investment (bn US\$)	2	46	193	1998
Exports (bn US\$)	54	219	1021	1999
Imports (bn US\$)	67	193	1178	1999
GDP per capita (US\$)	440	780	31910	1999



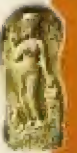


Recollecting Ourselves

Nature has endowed India with the most fertile lands in the world, and this land of plenty has been enclosed within the most secure natural borders. In the vastness of her fertile plains, the greatness and ubiquity of her rivers, and in the abundance of her rains and sunshine, there is just no other region of the world that can be compared with India. It is indeed to express their gratitude for bringing such abundance to our lands that Indians have been paying perpetual obeisance to the Himalayas; to Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Saraswatī, Narmada, Sindhu and Kaveri; and to the gods of sun and rain.

Having been blessed with such plenty and natural security, Indians have created a civilisation that is unparalleled in its spiritual as well as material affluence and sophistication. They have learnt and taught others to live in harmony with, and to solicitously care for, all sentient and insentient beings. They have evolved a social system that, with its anchorage in the family and the community, is self-disciplined and self-regulating. And they have acquired extraordinary skills in agriculture and industry to convert their natural endowments into such material wealth that foreign observers, from the time of Alexander up to the beginning of nineteenth century, have marvelled at their riches.

Continued...



Recollecting Ourselves

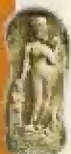
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India entered a phase of eclipse with the coming of the British; the darkness had probably begun to set in earlier, since about 1000 AD. However, this period of subjugation to alien rulers constitutes a minuscule part of the long civilisational history of India. With Independence, India has begun to come into her own. India has achieved much in the frontier technologies of today. We have established a strong infrastructure and knowledge base for a great industrial revival. The families and communities of India have begun to participate in this revival using their long established civilisational strengths and skills.

The revival however is constrained by the failure of modern metropolitan elite of India to recognise the strengths of India, and of the people of India. The elite India so far has failed to enter into a proper partnership with the ordinary India that is organised around self-disciplined and self-regenerating families, communities and localities and is anchored in the Indian civilisational genius.

The swadeshi effort is aimed at facilitating this partnership between metropolitan elite and the families, communities and localities of the people of India. Once the partnership is restored, there would be nothing to stop India from achieving the glory that is rightfully hers.





Samatana Bharat : TIMELESS INDIA
Jagrata Bharat : RESURGENT INDIA

Let India Awake and Arise

India is like Sri Hanuman, the great and devoted servant of Sri Rama. Hanuman, is the foremost amongst the *jnanis* and also the bearer of incomparable physical strength. But he has to be reminded of his strength and virtue before he makes the great leap across the oceans in the service of Sri Rama. Like Hanuman, India also needs to be reminded of her incomparable spiritual as well as material strengths. Once India recalls her greatness, she shall recover her spiritual and material leadership of the world in no time.

Swadeshi is an endeavour to recollect the greatness of India and thus open the path to a great Indian civilisational revival in the modern times.



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